COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Colchester, CT

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, April 7, 2022
BOE Budget Committee Meeting 9:00 AM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Morozowich, Donna Antonacci

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Burt, CFO Maggie Cosgrove, Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Charles Hewes, Director of Educational Operations Mario Hurtado

OTHERS PRESENT: Board of Education Member Margo Gignac, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Heather Petit

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Morozowich called the meeting to order at 9:02AM

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 Approval of March 3, 2022 Minutes

Motion by: D.Antonacci
To approve the minutes of the March 3, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting
Second by: J.Morozowich
Vote: Unanimous
Roll call: Donna Antonacci, Jessica Morozowich

5. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Update on 2022-2023 Budget

Superintendent Burt presented the Board of Education proposed budget to the Board of Finance on Tuesday, April 5, 2022. Overall, the budget discussions went very well. Superintendent Burt said there was discussion regarding the $4,000 for a PR firm in the budget. If deductions occur, this is a potential expense that could be reduced. Chair Morozowich said if this is a controversial topic, maybe an explanation can be added in the budget Q&A document for the public.

Additionally, Superintendent Burt said the tennis courts at Bacon Academy are in need of repair and not able to be used. If there are other deductions, the funds for tennis could potentially be reduced (stipends, et al.) as a team is not meeting currently. Director of Educational Operations,Mario Hurtado, said the courts were just repaired 4-5 years ago, and they are already in very bad shape. At this point, the courts would need to be completely redone and if concrete is used (as it is the recommended material) it would cost approximately one million dollars. To repair the tennis courts again it would cost $40,000 to $50,000 dollars but it has been proven that repairs will not last. Superintendent Burt spoke to Tiffany Quinn at Parks and Rec and their tennis courts are also not usable at this point.

5.2 Underground Storage Tank at BA - Update

Superintendent Burt provided an updated estimate of costs. A full survey of the area and parts needed to complete the work for the underground storage tank was done. The current proposal is far less than others that were received. The proposal presented will cover the complete remediation.

Superintendent Burt stated that when meeting with the state they said the remediation process went as well as it possibly could given that it was a large spill. Superintendent Burt reported that Travelers Insurance has informed the district that they will not cover the remediation costs due to the way the leak happened. Superintendent Burt said he has still not received an estimate of the initial clean up costs. CFO Cosgrove stated she did not receive any invoices yet in regard to the initial clean up. Mr. Hurtado did speak to the company and said right now the estimate is around $90,000.

In regard to the cost proposal for remediation, CFO Cosgrove said if the board would like to utilize assigned fund balance funds (unexpended money from prior Board of Education budget years), a formal request would need to go to the Board of Finance. CFO Cosgrove said otherwise, this could be charged to the current budget and less monies would then go into the assigned fund balance at the end of this school year. Superintendent Burt said if the board used current funds they can utilize end of year budget funds.

Chair Morozwich asked about the replacement day tank. Mr. Hurtado said they are still waiting for it to come in as there has been a delay due to nationwide shipping delays. This would not affect the remediation work. In regard to the cost proposal for complete remediation, the Budget Committee could approve this so the work could commence next week.

Motion by: J.Morozowich
To authorize the Superintendent to sign the Bacon Academy remediation proposal for $77,169
Second by: D.Antonnacci
Vote: Unanimous
Roll call: Donna Antonacci, Jessica Morozowich

5.3 ARPA Grant Update

Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Charles Hewes presented an update on the ARPA grant. Dr. Hewes said there are five priorities from the state for the use of ARPA funds. These are: 1) learning acceleration, academic renewal, and enrichment; 2) family and community connections; 3) social emotional wellbeing and mental health supports; 4) closing the digital divide (for example, in communities who are experiencing high levels of poverty, the state is trying to ensure all families have access to the internet and a device for their child(ren); and 5) building safe and healthy schools.

Dr. Hewes said the entire curriculum implementation line and technology supply lines had been moved to ARPA; however, these are usually funded by the district budget and will potentially need to move back there at the end of the grant. Dr. Hewes went over detailed grant budgeted items which have been approved by the state.

Chair Morozowich asked that the detailed grant allocation be put on the website with a narrative about grant position salaries and future sunset.

Ms. Antonacci asked if Dr. Hewes had an estimate on how long the funding would be needed in regard to student learning loss. Dr. Hewes said we will have more data available this spring which will be telling in regard to where students are. The district uses formative assessments for students. Dr. Hewes said that the fact that the district has these funds through 2024 is a good thing as the grant could be adjusted on how to best meet the needs of the students. Dr. Hewes said the district is making headway and the spring data will show if the district has caught some of the students up and will also show their readiness to learn.

Chair Morozowich asked if over the summer the data could be presented to the board on how students are fairing. Dr. Hewes said he is happy to present the findings to the board once the state data is released.

6. BUDGET REPORTS

6.1 Monthly Budget Reports

CFO Cosgrove presented the monthly budget report. CFO Cosgrove said that the $77, 169 for Bacon Academy's remediation is only 2/10 of 1% of the budget. Employee benefits that have to be paid out are overdrawn as we do not know about them ahead of time (except for teachers). The Magnet School tuition line should cover the VOAG tuition line. CFO Cosgrove said that cyber security insurance is getting more expensive and has affected the liability insurance line. Chair Morozowich asked if this expense should be incurred in the technology line. CFO Cosgrove said no as it is an annual cost and multiple applications are filled out and then and is marketed for us to find the most reasonable rate.

6.2 Cafeteria Fund

CFO Cosgrove reviewed the cafeteria finance report. CFO Cosgrove said it has remained status quo.

6.3 Health Insurance Reserve

CFO Cosgrove presented the health insurance reserve report. CFO Cosgrove said we are up significantly from the beginning of the year, most likely from medical procedures being scheduled now that COVID restrictions have started to be lifted.

6.4 Colchester Town and BOE 2021 Healthcare Cost Report
CFO Cosgrove spoke to the healthcare cost report which Lockton sends to the district/town every month. The report details the exact cost of claims overall for town/board of education.

6.5 Special Education Excess Cost Report
Superintendent Burt presented the Special Education Excess Cost Report.

6.6 Use of Schools
None.

6.7 Capital Reserve
None.

6.8 Budget Transfers Under $5,000
Budget transfer request for Bacon Academy for students who qualified for CMEA.

6.9 Budget Transfers Over $5,000
Budget transfer presented so that the underground fuel lines can be brought up to date for the Bacon Academy tank. Mr. Hurtado said the district has six weeks to have the contract approved and for work to be completed to meet the deadline of the extension granted by the state.

A budget transfer was presented for the fuel tanks at Jack Jackter Intermediate School as well. Mr. Hurtado will become the certified operator of those tanks and as such will need to do an annual inspection and subsequent reporting to the state. The district has to ensure the tanks are operational and corrective work needs to be done at JJIS so that the tanks are safely operational.

Superintendent Burt said that these were previously the responsibility of the town but now will be done by the school district. The records were not being maintained and inspections not being done on the town side; so now that they will be maintained by the district, state reporting will be done on a timely basis without need for requests for extensions.

Motion by: J.Morozowich
To approve the two budget transfers for Bacon Academy and Jack Jackter Intermediate School for $30,000 and $15,000 respectively.
Second by: D.Antonacci
Vote: Unanimous
Roll call: Donna Antonacci, Jessica Morozowich

Chair Morozowich asked if she should reach out to Board Chair Alexander Oliphant in regard to having a special meeting and formal motion to contract with the company for

the work. Superintendent Burt said he will reach out to the chair and vice-chair about a potential special meeting given some other items that have recently come in as well.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None.

8. *NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW ISSUES RAISED OR SUBJECTS DEVELOPED

None.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:19AM

Respectfully submitted,

Heather R. Petit
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent